
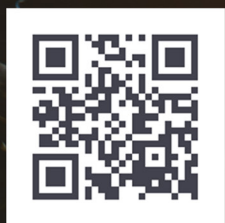


December 2016

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Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller

From the Top

Q: What is your vision to shape the force for the future?

A: The Air Force Reserve, along with the rest of the Department of Defense, is entering a challenging and extraordinary time in the history of the United States. We are the smallest and leanest force we've ever been, operating day in and day out around the world. We have been challenged with readying a force across the full spectrum of warfighting capabilities. We are a remarkably talented force, and we continue to offer unprecedented opportunities to every Airman, regardless of gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. Sustained longevity of this talented force, serving our nation as "Airmen for Life," is of the utmost importance and is the legacy of the Air Force Reserve.

Our newest Airmen are flexible, agile and more technologically advanced than ever. They are effective at communicating across new mediums. Now, more than ever, we need to leverage the skills of the current and prospective Airmen, especially in the space and cyberspace domains, and bridge the gap between their civilian and military careers. As Citizen Airmen, we know there is great value in serving our country while pursuing other opportunities. Let's encourage this and cultivate a force with the endurance, innovative mindset and ingenuity that is critical for our future.

Q: Where do we fit into the fight of tomorrow?

A: We share a common bond: our unique calling to serve our communities, our families and our country. Many Citizen Airmen chose to join after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, during a challenging time in our nation's history. That courage speaks volumes about their character and commitment to upholding

America's values. Based on the challenges we face as a nation, Citizen Airmen play a critical role in taking the fight to the enemy, and we will continue to be an operational reserve. However, we must do so in a resource-constrained environment with funding lines that are unlikely to increase. I hope this motivates every one of us to make smart, innovative decisions on how we build a force of the future. The Reserve will strive to support missions that afford stability between civilian and military careers for our Citizen Airmen, civilians and contractors. We will invest in our people and their willingness to volunteer. Likewise, it is the responsibility of each and every one of us to be poised and postured to defend our nation. For those in command positions, empower every Reserve member in your units to be ready, qualified and prepared to serve. As we are all aware, in our line of work, success is not a catchphrase: It's a requirement.

With 2017 right around the corner, it's a great time to reflect on personal and professional goals. I appreciate your commitment to excellence. As Citizen Airmen, civilians and contractors, I know you are very familiar with balancing the demands of a military career, civilian employers and family. Please remember during this holiday season to take the time to reinvigorate yourselves and connect with your friends, your communities and, especially, your loved ones. For our many Airmen away from home during this holiday season, we appreciate your sacrifices and willingness to serve. It is an honor and a privilege to serve alongside you in our Air Force Reserve. Continue to always do your best and take care of each other, and enjoy your holiday season!



Chief Master Sgt. Ericka Kelly

Chief's View

Q: What motivated you to pursue or accept this new position?

A: This position is an opportunity to provide a voice for the Airmen. With an operational background, I felt I could provide Air Force Reserve Command leadership a perspective from the ground level and represent our Airmen and their concerns/issues, passing along an Airman viewpoint and the challenges they face balancing civilian work, family and Reserve commitment. I have a sense of dedication and commitment to serve the people around me.

As we grow in the military, we are consistently teaching/learning the wingman concept, to take care of those around us, to foster the development and leadership of our young Airmen, and train them to continue the great legacy of our enlisted corps. Accepting this opportunity is a way for me to ensure I give back to the young men and women and honor those who ensured I had the opportunity to excel and achieve things I never dreamed of when I first joined.

Q: What is your advice for junior Citizen Airmen in their careers?

A: Follow the tenets outlined in Air Force Instruction 36-2618, "Enlisted Force Structure," and you will never go wrong. Those in the junior enlisted Airman tier should focus on adapting to military requirements, achieving occupational (Air Force specialty code) proficiency and learning how to be highly productive members of the Air Force. The four pillars for our senior enlisted leaders are built upon the foundation of proper AFSC training, completion of enlisted professional military education and eventually obtainment of your Community College of the Air Force degree. As an

Airman, your focus should be on skill-level upgrade training and then Airman Leadership School in-residence completion, because we cannot begin a conversation about military career development until we are adequately trained to meet the requirements of the mission.

I would like to highlight that coming into the Reserve is hard work. Thus, we all need to strive to find the balance between affecting positive changes around us and taking care of ourselves and our families. As we do the job day in and day out, it is often the young men and women on the front line who see firsthand the changes that are needed. I would say do not be afraid to challenge yourself and make a difference. If you see something that can be accomplished in a better way, do not be afraid to step up and make recommendations. Careers should not be planned out, they should be grown. Part of this growth is allowing oneself to explore different paths, have setbacks and learn from the challenges we face. If we try to plan out our careers and get the right checks, we run the risk of ending up with a career that falls short of the critical experience that grows leadership.

Q: How has your life changed since accepting this job?

A: Life has turned into a whirlwind since I have taken on the major command position of command chief. I often find myself at the end of the day wishing I had a few more hours to work just one more issue or another couple of days to make one more trip to visit the men and women making the mission happen. Life is busy, but it is fantastically rewarding. I am thankful to be part of a great leadership team and that I have the opportunity to wake up each day and find ways to make life better for the men and women of the Reserve.



*A modified C-130 Hercules soars overhead as it prepares to spray herbicide at the Saylor Creek Training Range in Idaho Sept. 17. The aircraft, which belongs to the the 910th Airlift Wing at Youngstown Air Reserve Base, Ohio, flies only 100 feet above the ground to spray aerial herbicide. The 910th is the only Department of Defense organization with fixed-wing aerial spray capability to control disease-carrying insects, pest insects and undesirable vegetation. The capability is also used to disperse oil spills in large bodies of water.
(Senior Airman Connor J. Marth)*

Gen. David L. Goldfein **Chief of Staff, United States Air Force**

Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller **Commander, Air Force Reserve Command**

Col. Bruce M. Bender **Director of Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command**

Cliff Tyler **Managing Editor, Public Affairs, Air Force Reserve Command**

Adam Butterick **Graphic Designer, Multimedia, Air Force Reserve Command**

(Front cover) The Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association is dedicated to supporting and defending those who have defended the United States and its freedoms. For more on the association, see the story on Page 22. (Back cover) The wildly successful Air Force associate partnership program traces its roots back to the relationship Air Force Reserve Command and Air Mobility Command began more than 40 years ago. For more on this relationship, see the story on Page 10.

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Citizen Airman magazine (ISSN No. 0887-9680) is published bi-monthly by Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command Office of Public Affairs for the commander of Air Force Reserve Command. Periodical postage paid at Warner Robins, Georgia, and additional mailing offices. Copies are mailed, free of charge, to the homes of all Reservists. Content is normally news articles and features developed for release to commercial media as part of the Air Force Reserve's continuing public affairs program. Opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the Air Force Reserve. All photos are U.S. Air Force photos unless otherwise indicated. Readers-per-copy ratio: 4-1.

Send inquiries and submissions to HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.
Or, email them to hqafrc.pa.citizenairman@us.af.mil.

For questions about the magazine or its contents, you can call (478) 327-1770 or DSN 497-1770.
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POSTMASTER: Please send all Forms 3579 to Citizen Airman, HQ AFRC/PAOM, 155 Richard Ray Blvd., Robins AFB, GA 31098-1661.



Education Key to Addressing Flat-Rate Per Diem Concerns

Since the Department of Defense implemented a change to Joint Travel Regulations in 2014, thus establishing a flat-rate per diem allowance for long-term temporary duty assignments, Air Force Reserve Command units have continued to execute operations amid questions and concerns from Citizen Airmen who believe the new policy is having a negative impact on their ability to perform the command's mission.

The issues on this subject range from decreased volunteerism for missions with long-term travel to increased administrative requirements on units and Citizen Airmen.

In a recent memorandum to commanders, Lt. Gen. Maryanne Miller, AFRC commander, acknowledged these concerns and said the key to incorporating the flat-rate per diem allowance in the Reserve mission does not lie in implementing new policies or changing the JTR. Instead, Miller asserted the key to addressing Reservists' concerns is education.

"Based on our staff's analysis, we have determined the JTR, as currently written, provides enough flexibility to accomplish the mission," Miller said.

The new policy was put in place to encourage travelers to take advantage of cost-saving opportunities when they are on a long-term TDY — 31 days or more at a single location. The commercial hotel industry typically offers reduced rates to ensure occupancy for these "extended stays." Additionally, Department of Defense analysis demonstrates the flat-rate per diem adequately covers lodging, meals and incidental expenses, represents a better model for actual costs incurred, and saves taxpayer dollars.

The flat rate is as follows:

- On the travel day to the TDY location: 100 percent of lodging per diem at the locality rate and 75 percent of the meals and incidental expenses rate.

- For TDYs 31 to 180 days: a flat rate of 75 percent of the locality rate (lodging and M&IE) for each full day, starting day two through the end of the TDY.

- For TDYs (approved by the appropriate authority per the JTR) more than 180 days: a flat rate of 55 percent of the locality rate (lodging and M&IE) for each full day, starting day two through the end of the TDY.

Miller acknowledged the details of the policy are confusing. She urged travelers who are on long-term TDY orders to contact their servicing Defense Travel Management Office-contracted commercial travel office, which is required to assist in finding adequate lodging within the flat-rate per diem allowance.

"If the traveler and the CTO are unable to find lodging at the reduced per diem rate, the authorizing official may then authorize reimbursement of the actual lodging rate (not to exceed the locality per diem rate), but the traveler receives M&IE at the 75 percent or 55 percent rate," the general said.

Miller reminded Reservists the flat-rate policy only applies when travelers are TDY to a single location for more than 30 days. If travelers are TDY for more than 30 days but to multiple locations, the flat-rate per diem only applies to locations where they are TDY for more than 30 days.

Additional information, including answers to frequently asked questions, can be found by searching for "flat-rate per diem" on the DTMO website (<http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil>).

"I encourage commanders to assess their local mission requirements and use all the tools at their disposal, such as negotiating contracts with local lodging facilities for long-term TDY requirements or using the AO waiver authority granted by the JTR, to mitigate adverse effects on their Citizen Airmen," Miller said. "Take care of the mission — it's yours to own."

(AFRC public affairs, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia)

Grissom Fire Department Earns International Accreditation

In September, the Fire Department at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Indiana, became one of only 26 departments in the Air Force to receive "accredited agency" status from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

The accreditation was achieved after a five-year process during which the Fire Department had to meet the highest international standards in 252 training and logistic indicators.

Fire Chief John Ireland expressed pride in his employees for making the accreditation possible through diligence and hard work.

"I'm proud of everyone for the hard work they put in to make this happen," Ireland said. "We had every aspect of our department evaluated, and if we didn't have such a great team, we wouldn't have gotten this accreditation."

The CFAI process is voluntary and provides an agency with an improvement model designed to assess its performance internally. After years of preparation, the final step in the accreditation process is a peer assessment performed by a team from departments around the country selected by CFAI to spend time onsite and make first-person assessments of the department's performance and capabilities.

Christian Jacobs, Grissom Fire Department accreditation manager, said that although the amount of time and effort required for the accreditation process was daunting, it was worth it for the experience and insight it provided.

"We put in about 1,100 man-hours to make this accreditation happen," Jacobs said. "It was worth the time to be recognized as one of the best fire departments in the Air Force and the country. It really makes us stand out and shows how dedicated our people are to being the best at their jobs."

(Staff Sgt. Dakota Bergl, 434th Air Refueling Wing public affairs, Grissom ARB)

Popular Social Media Trend May Violate DOD Regulations

A young woman paced herself as she ran around her neighborhood, her breath visible as the brisk morning air cycled through her lungs. She dodged people walking their dogs and trash cans left out for pickup before finally reaching a pausing point where she took out her phone.

Dressed in civilian workout attire, she performed a pushup challenge on camera and then explained to her social media audience how the pushups were intended to raise awareness for veteran suicide prevention and to honor fallen veterans.

In this scenario, no one could tell she had taken an oath and wore a military uniform to work.

Some service members have participated in similar activities while in uniform or at their workstations. While they are allowed to participate, it shouldn't be done while representing the armed forces.

Military members interested in supporting nonprofit organizations and fundraising causes may do so if they follow established guidelines, such as Air Force Instruction 36-3101, "Fundraising within the Air Force"; and Department of Defense Regulation 5500.07-R, "Joint Ethics Regulation."

Basic considerations to keep in mind when supporting nonprofits include:

- Fundraising cannot be done during duty hours, although lunch hours are permissible.
- No form of endorsement is allowed while in uniform.
- Fundraising by private organizations and unofficial activities can generally not occur during the Combined Federal Campaign or Air Force Assistance Fund campaign.
- No fundraising is allowed in the workplace.

Ready to continue her run, the woman saw several people had liked her post, not because she was military but because they believed in the cause.

(Tech. Sgt. Robert Barnett, secretary of the Air Force public affairs)

Pope's Puns



‘Gryphons’ Prepare to Benefit From Upcoming Deployment

When the Air Force redesigned how it postures its air expeditionary forces, it significantly modified how Reservists mobilize.

Two of the main goals for the redesigned AEF construct were to provide more predictable deployments for Reservists and to give members of individual units the opportunity to deploy together. At the time, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, who is now retired, said the “new construct will facilitate better teamwork and unit performance during deployed operations.”

The 710th Combat Operations Squadron at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia, will soon have the chance to demonstrate the benefits of this new AEF concept that implements deployment periods called reserve component periods. The 710th COS “Gryphons” are focused on preparing for mobilization to support the period that begins in January.

The RCP is the unit’s vulnerability window for pre-planned involuntary mobilization that supports contingency operations. The manifestation of this mobilization and the transition from a strategic to an operational Reserve is the first for the combat operations squadrons that augment active-duty air operations centers and Air Force component staffs.

The Gryphons will support a long-term Air Force goal of total force integration by deploying nearly one-third of their unit to the 609th Air Operations Center at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. The upcoming deployment provides for much-needed augmentation of the active-duty forces currently running the air war at Al Udeid. The 710th mission task is to provide highly trained and experienced Airmen across all divisions of the AOC.

Gryphons — young and old, new and seasoned — are eager to benefit from the hands-on experience of working side by side with their active-duty and Air National Guard counterparts, while employed at the forefront of the air war in the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

“As an Airman newly out of tech school, I am excited at the opportunity to deploy this early in my career and to take this irreplaceable experience forward to future deployments,” said Senior Airman Jamie Cruz.

With the new AEF construct, however, this experience will have a greater impact on units than in previous years, according to Col. Laurie Dickson, 710th COS deputy commander.

“Deploying as a unit provides a platform for the 710th to become a more efficient and effective warfighting entity when called to service,” Dickson said. “The ability for Gryphons to deploy and fight the air war together brings a new depth to our operational knowledge as a unit. We will all learn together, and new Gryphons will join a team of combat-seasoned AOC professionals operating on a consistent, predictable rotation.”

The colonel said the anticipated lessons-learned

and combat experience the Gryphons will gain during the deployment will reveal new tactics, techniques and procedures specific to the CENTCOM mission.

“In contrast, the unit has been historically challenged to consolidate experiences when compiling lessons-learned from individual augmentees staggered across many exercises and tours,” Dickson said. “In the end, this new construct supports total force integration by improving units throughout the Air Force Reserve.

“As the 710th Combat Operations Squadron Gryphons complete their deployment taskings and move toward future deployment opportunities, our active-duty counterparts and coalition partners can take solace in the fact that the Gryphons are consummate professionals who hit the ground ready to fight.”

(Information for this article provided by the 710th COS.)



The explosive ordnance disposal rodeo at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, provided an opportunity for emergency responders across multiple civilian and military agencies to observe and gain hands-on experience with current robotic capabilities. (Courtesy photo)

AFRC Teams With Other Organizations to Test Latest EOD Capabilities

Explosive ordnance disposal experts from Air Force Reserve Command and a host of other organizations teamed up to test the latest EOD robotic capabilities at the inaugural Eastern National Robot Rodeo at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Georgia, the final week of August.

The Combating Terrorism Technical Support Office, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center and the United Kingdom’s Defense Science and Technologies Laboratory were the core sponsors of the event.

Members of the EOD flight at Dobbins played host to the capabilities exercise at the base. Civilian partners instrumental in the event’s success were the Transportation Security Administration, Sandia National Laboratories and the National Bomb Squad Commander’s Advisory Board.

Dobbins was chosen as the main exercise site due to its central location for military and civilian EOD teams located on the East Coast. The TSA also provided exercise locations at Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport where

the teams simulated real-world situations based on potential transportation threats.

The EOD rodeo provided hands-on indoctrination and identification of current robotic capabilities and technological shortfalls needing advanced solutions. Successful interaction among the suppliers and users of EOD robotics will aid in the development of future technological solutions to support international partners, the United States military and domestic public service bomb squads in the execution of worldwide counterterrorism and counter improvised explosive device operations.

The exercise successfully brought together emergency responders across multiple civilian and military agencies in a grand effort to observe, interact and share their experience to both identify and incapacitate improvised explosive devices.

So why is it important to get state-of-the-art equipment and training when it comes to explosive identification and disposal? Whether in military or civilian communities, manufactured unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices are scattered throughout the world in long-forgotten battlefields and civilian communities targeted by terrorists.

The United Nations estimates more than 100 million hidden landmines and millions of unexploded bombs and artillery shells remain undiscovered around the world.

To highlight the UN’s pressing call for nations to address the worldwide unexploded ordnance issue, President Obama announced in early September during his first visit to Laos that the United States will provide \$90 million over the next three years to assist that country, which was heavily bombed by the United States during the Vietnam War, clear unexploded ordnance.

It is easier to identify metal explosive devices than homemade explosives that incorporate chemicals and fertilizers shrouded in plastics. Although there are existing tactics, techniques and procedures that have evolved through experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, the expanded use of robotics is proving to be both a life-saver and a most valuable tool in meeting the increasing need to identify and dispose of hidden munitions — even nonmetallic devices — before their untimely detonation.

“Air Force Reserve EOD Airmen have been instrumental in the counter-IED fight the last 13 years and have completed several Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom deployments in Southwest Asia,” said Senior Master Sgt. Matt Hill, EOD functional area manager at AFRC headquarters, Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

“Hosting this event at Dobbins ARB was a big deal for the Air Force Reserve,” Hill said. “Not only did we get to trade tactics, techniques and procedures with our military service counterparts and civilian emergency responders, we also provided critical robotic capability feedback to the CTTSO, which will use the information in generating future robotic capabilities. We often talk about strategic engagement with the total force. This week, we experienced it firsthand.”

(Gene Van Deventer, program analyst in the Directorate of Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection’s Installation Support Branch, Headquarters AFRC)



Senior Master Sgt. Darby Perrin, an Air Force artist from the 465th Air Refueling Squadron, Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, unveils his painting at the Dawn Patrol Rendezvous event at the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Ohio. (Staff Sgt. Joel McCullough)

Art Unveiling Helps Commemorate Air Force Reserve History

Celebrating 100 years of Reserve air power, Air Force artist Senior Master Sgt. Darby Perrin unveiled a painting during the 2016 World War I Dawn Patrol Rendezvous event Oct. 1 at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

The painting depicts 1st Lt. Charles d’Olive’s victory over three German Fokker DVII fighter planes on Sept. 13, 1917. Commissioned in the U.S. Signal Enlisted Reserve Corps, d’Olive was the last officially recognized U.S. flying ace of WW I. He was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Perrin, who is a member of the 465th Air Refueling Squadron at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, unveiled his painting to d’Olive’s daughter, Susan d’Olive, and her family alongside Brig. Gen. Vito Addabbo, mobilization assistant to the commander, Air Force Global Strike Command, and Lt. Col. James Morris, vice commander of the 307th Bomb Wing, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana.

“He did a wonderful job,” d’Olive said. “Paintings are individual creations that come out of historical fact. He (Perrin) has done his homework on what everything should look like, but also it’s his own creation.”

The Air Force Reserve Command history office at Robins AFB, Georgia, assigned Perrin the role of capturing the essence of the WW I event. He completed the painting in 18 days.

Perrin did not base his work solely on the historical stories told.

“I did a lot of research on the details and the mechanics of the planes,” he said.

(445th Airlift Wing public affairs, Wright-Patterson AFB)

AFRCAMC PARTNERSHIP

Two commands have a long history of successful associations

The 349th Air Mobility Wing at Travis Air Force Base, California, is the Air Force Reserve's largest associate wing. In partnership with the active-duty 60th AMW, members of the 349th fly and maintain C-5 Galaxy, C-17 Globemaster III and KC-10 Extender aircraft. In this photo, Col. Patrick T. Williams completes his final flight as the 349th AMW's vice commander in December 2015. (Senior Airman Madelyn Brown)

(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of stories on the close working relationship Air Force Reserve Command and Air Mobility Command have enjoyed since 1968. Future stories will focus on current successful AFRC/AMC partnerships and how the commands are planning to maintain and expand their relationship into the future.)

On April 6, 1968, with very little fanfare, a trio of Air Force Reservists made history when Maj. Ronald D. Blalock, Capt. Woodrow T. Fail and Capt. Anthony Colange flew a C-141 Starlifter owned by the active-duty Air Force's 63rd Military Airlift Wing on a mission from Norton Air Force Base in California to Tinker AFB, Oklahoma.

The Reservists were assigned to the newly established 944th Military Airlift Group at Norton, the first Air Force Reserve associate unit, and they were selected to fly the first Air Force Reserve/Air Mobility Command associate airlift program flight. The Reserve was not a major command in '68, and AMC was called Military Airlift Command at the time, but the associate airlift program that came to life on that spring day just a couple of miles east of downtown San Bernardino would grow into a robust partnership between AFRC and AMC that has paid huge dividends for the Air Force over the last 48 years.

Just four months after that historic flight, on Aug. 14, the first all-Reserve C-141 associate crew left Norton on a mission to Southeast Asia in support of the Vietnam War. Capt. William Maxey served as aircraft commander, and the 944th MAG commander, Col. Richard P. McFarland, who had promised such a flight within six months of the unit's activation, was aboard as an additional crewmember.

Between Maxey's first flight in August 1968 and the last flight out of Saigon almost seven years later, Reservists assigned to associate units contributed greatly to airlift operations into and out of Southeast Asia. The associate program was off and running.

The idea behind the associate program was pretty simple: The active duty would own the aircraft, and the Reserve would provide aircrews, maintenance personnel and aerial porters to augment the active duty to get the most use out of the massive C-141s that were just coming into the Air Force inventory.

The associate setup at Norton was just a couple of months old when the Air Force decided to expand the program by establishing a second associate airlift group on the West Coast and two on the East Coast. On July 25, 1969, the Air Force reorganized and redesignated the 939th Tactical Airlift Group and its 313th Tactical Airlift Squadron as associate military airlift units and moved them from Portland International Airport, Oregon, to the MAC port at McChord AFB, Washington. On the East Coast, early C-141 associate airlift units were organized at McGuire AFB, New Jersey, and Dover AFB, Delaware.

MAC and AFRES expanded the associate program with an additional seven C-141 units in 1969. In the early 1970s, the

two organizations established C-5 associate airlift squadrons to support the Air Force's newest cargo plane.

The associate airlift program continued to grow through the 1970s and '80s and overcame a host of challenges, from the distribution of air reserve technicians and their duties in the maintenance complexes to the dichotomy between the Reserve requirement for training and MAC's operational needs. By 1988, there were six associate airlift wings that were operationally ready and contributing half of MAC's strategic airlift crews. The Reserve associate airlift program also included a maintenance element that performed 40 percent of MAC's daily maintenance needs.

The associate airlift program has grown and changed over the years to include the active associate unit program, where the Reserve or Air National Guard owns the aircraft and the active duty embeds a squadron, group or wing that provides aircrews, aircraft maintenance and support personnel who share the responsibility of flying and maintaining the AFRC or ANG aircraft.

From its early history in the C-141 and C-5 worlds, the associate program has expanded to include C-17s, C-130s, KC-10s, KC-135s and other airframes. It has also expanded to fighter; space; cyberspace; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; and remotely piloted aircraft organizations.

Currently, the Air Force has about 120 associate locations under the total force integration umbrella, more than two-thirds of which involve relationships between the Reserve and the active duty. The wildly successful Air Force associate partnership program can trace its roots back to the relationship AFRC and AMC began more than 40 years ago.

"Our associations with AMC have worked great over the years," said Col. Gerard Malloy, deputy director of the Air, Space and Information Operations Directorate at AFRC headquarters, Robins AFB, Georgia. "Whether it's us flying or working on active-duty iron (in a traditional associate partnership) or a reverse associate (partnership) where the active duty works on and flies Reserve iron, the name of the game is still the same: We need to ensure our members are current and qualified so that we can provide combat capability to the combatant commanders."

Malloy said the commands have had to work through some difficulties from time to time, but the associations between AFRC and AMC over the years have been extremely successful.

"When you work with any partner over time, you're going to have your ups and downs," he said. "But I think AMC values us as a strategic partner and relies on us to provide steady-state support as an operational command. We leverage our strength by building an experience base from folks leaving active duty who are still looking for a venue to serve. It takes years to build that experience and expertise, so we try to do all we can to capture it when it leaves active duty."

AMC is proud of the way it has integrated and organized its active and Reserve forces to leverage the unique strengths

A member of the 512th Airlift Wing at Dover AFB, Delaware, guides the pilot of one of the wing's C-5 Galaxy aircraft. The 512th has teamed up with the active-duty 436th AW since the early 1970s to move troops and cargo around the globe. (Capt. Bernie Kale)



and perspectives of each to execute the mobility mission and is committed to growing this partnership in the future.

“With more than half of all mobility aircraft assigned to Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command units, we lead the Air Force in operating as a single force,” according to the recently released AMC Rapid Global Mobility Vision document. “The classic and active association mix construct provides a flexible template to meet operational requirements in both surge and steady-state periods while retaining a viable strategic reserve for emergencies. For nearly 50 years, this concept has worked well.

“To ensure readiness and access to resources, especially when high operations tempo becomes steady-state for a lengthy period, it is essential to optimize the composition and development of our associate programs. We will continually evaluate our association partnerships for potential adjustments while exploring the integrated staff and wing constructs.”

Dover AFB in Delaware, where the Reserve and active duty have been teaming up to move troops and cargo around the globe since the early 1970s, is just one example of a base where an active-duty and Reserve association has paid dividends. Since the first all-Reserve aircrew flew an active-duty owned C-5 out of Dover in November 1973, the active-duty 436th Airlift Wing and the Reserve 512th AW have built a tremendous working relationship.

Working seamlessly with the 436th, more than 1,300 Citizen Airmen from the 512th were called to active duty during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Fliers, maintenance specialists, aerial porters, medical personnel and security forces were deployed around the world as well as stateside for more than a year.

The wings began a new era in associate airlift when the 436th received its first C-17 Globemaster III aircraft in May of 2007, and the associate relationship was expanded to include the Air Force's newest cargo plane. Whether flying C-5s or C-17s, the 436th and 512th are proof of how effective a classic associate partnership can be.

“The relationship between the 436th and 512th is as strong as ever,” said Col. Ethan Griffin, 436th AW commander. “Our strong legacy of teamwork doesn’t happen by chance. It requires the commitment and respect of each and every Airman, supervisor and leader at Team Dover. Col. Bull Durham and I, former colleagues in the C-17 at Charleston (Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina), are committed to continuing and building upon the strong legacy of the active-duty and Reserve partnership in the coming years. Our commitment, and that of our Airmen, makes Team Dover a shining example of an installation whose people always accomplish the mission together.”

Col. Scott “Bull” Durham, 512th AW commander, agreed that the association between the Reserve and active-duty units at Dover works well — thanks in large part to excellent communication between the two organizations.

“Communication is the key to making these associations work,” he said. “We each have to work to understand the constraints and objectives the other component faces and aspires to accomplish. In that understanding, we are able to capitalize on the strengths each brings to the fight.”

That’s what the associate program is all about — capitalizing on the strengths that each component brings to the fight.

(Joyner is assigned to the HQ AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB.)



Airmen from the 436th Maintenance Squadron at Dover AFB pose with their shovels near the nose of a C-5 Galaxy as they take a break from clearing snow and ice from around the aircraft. Members of the 436th share responsibility for maintaining the C-5 with Reservists from the 512th MXS. (Greg L. Davis)

Deployment-Ready

Inter-allied officers building trust through relationships

For the majority of Air Force Reserve Citizen Airmen, prior to their first deployment, their only interaction with partner-nation military members is passing them in their base exchange parking lot.

However, with joint service and inter-allied missions becoming the new reality for Reservists, the ability to apply effective leadership skills by communicating, collaborating and executing missions with members of partner nations has never been more imperative.

In 1992, a group of air reserve officials from Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom met in Lahr, Germany, with the aim of learning from the experiences of the international air reserve community. This group formalized its collaboration, along with other member nations, by creating the International Air Reserve Symposium. Over the last 20 years, the IARS has provided a valuable forum for senior air reserve representatives from global air forces and air reserve components to discuss common topics by sharing experiences and information, and cooperating on air force topics.

The IARS Committee on Leadership Development, previously managed by the chairperson of the Board of Advisors of the Air Force Reserve Professional Development Center and supported by the secretary of IARS, operates a training course — International Junior Officer Leadership Development — for company grade officers from partner nations around the world. Each summer, more than 50 CGOs from NATO and partner nations, including the United States, Canada, Scotland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Switzerland and Germany, gather for one week to develop leadership skills in an internationally collaborative environment, under the guidance of the host-nation's leaders as well as senior leaders from the Air Force Reserve.

The objectives of the IJOLD course are to introduce students to a variety of leadership tools, provide forums for discussion and promote the exchange of ideas within an inter-allied environment. Students are exposed to the host-nation's military and societal culture, history, leadership styles, and decision-making processes in order to benefit each participant's individual leadership development and to build partner-nation trust for future joint-mission success.

"IJOLD is an outstanding program that provides our CGOs an incredible opportunity to learn more about our coalition partners and develop personal and professional relationships with their international peers," said Brig. Gen. James P. Scanlan, mobilization assistant to the commander, Air Force Expeditionary Center. Scanlan served as U.S. head of delegation and senior officer during the 2016 IJOLD hosted by the German air force at its Technical Training Center South in Kaufburen, Germany, Aug. 20-27.

"Developing these relationships at the early stages of their careers will strengthen our long-term international partnerships and enhance future coalition operations," the general said.

For many years, IJOLD has served as the capstone course of the Air Force Reserve professional development program for CGOs, allowing students to apply lessons learned from the Reserve Officer Developmental Education pre-requisite course, locally taught by Air Force Reserve senior leaders. For members who previously graduated from RODE and received a vector from their development team board to further develop their leadership, IJOLD provides the opportunity to apply many of RODE's important lessons in an international environment.

Capt. Robert Bruce, who works in the Office of the Chief of Air Force Reserve at the Pentagon and is a RODE graduate, identified the strong connection between the two courses.

"At RODE, we learned about the power of networking, making connections and building enduring, mutually beneficial relationships," Bruce said.

"At IJOLD, the importance of developing relationships is taken to a new level as course graduates develop professional and personal contacts from across the globe," said Capt. Melanie Singer of the 57th Information Aggressor Squadron at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, another RODE graduate.

For many military members who have not yet been deployed, IJOLD teaches them how to overcome cultural differences and language barriers that can contribute to communication challenges within an international environment.

"Having the opportunity to learn how to adjust and collaborate in a training environment is outstanding," said French IJOLD graduate CR2 Jean Marc-Seignez, general staff of French armed forces.

"In today's global environment, learning more about partner-nation military forces at the company grade level will enable our young officers to smoothly transition from the tactical to strategic view as they progress in their careers," Scanlan said. "IJOLD is an exceptional program and a great investment that strengthens our coalition and provides our young officers with tremendous insight and experience."

In a continuously shrinking global environment, the IJOLD course provides CGOs with the opportunity to take their relationship and trust-building opportunities from beyond the base exchange parking lot and into the academic setting, preparing today's Citizen Airman to serve as effective leaders when called upon to become tomorrow's joint warfighters.

(Information for this article provided by the Air Force Reserve Professional Development Center at Robins AFB, Georgia.)



Company grade officers from Germany, Canada and the United States row to shore during a water rescue exercise that was part of the International Junior Officer Leadership course Aug. 20-27 in Kaufburen, Germany. (Lt. Col. Knut Ries)

Surviving Khobar Towers

By Capt. Andre Bowser

An exhausted Services Airman takes a break in a library after a long night of work in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

On the upper floor of a different building in the Khobar Towers military dormitory, a junior officer is preparing for bed and an early rise the next morning.

More than 7,000 miles away, a Services Airman in the Air Force Reserve is preparing to report to active duty the next day, June 26, 1996, at the Port Mortuary on Dover Air Force Base, Delaware.

All three Airmen's lives, and many others, would forever change that night.

Around 10 p.m., on June 25, 1996, the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia were rocked by a massive explosion, and the ripple effect of the blast would be felt for decades.

Twenty years after the attack, three survivors of the bombing and its aftermath are working side by side at the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover. With the night of the attack and the days immediately after seared into their memories, they recently reflected on their similar journeys.

Far removed from that summer night in 1996, an uncanny coincidence has brought them together. They are Air Force leaders and experts now in the esoteric field of military mortuary affairs, honoring all fallen members of the armed forces.

Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, which was known as the Port Mortuary back when the Khobar Towers were attacked, is often described as the best-worst place to work. It is known as the most exclusive assignment among Services Airmen.

AFMAO Commander Col. Dawn Lancaster was a first lieutenant and assigned as a protocol officer when the attack happened. She said that before the explosion rocked her room and she was jostled violently on her bed — a couple buildings away from the structure that was directly impacted — her biggest concern was waking up early enough to set up for a change of command the next morning.

"I was lying in bed, half asleep, half awake," she recalled while fingering the pages of a photo album she's kept of her time living at the Khobar Towers and working at the 4404th Air Expeditionary Wing. "I remember trying to scream, and nothing came out."

In the basement of another building, then-Senior Airman Meshelle Lemon had just worked a full shift as a recreation specialist. The current AFMAO chief enlisted advisor, Chief Master Sgt. Meshelle Dyer said she would have been in her room

had she not been invited to a midnight meal by a co-worker.

"She might have saved my life — or at the very least saved me from getting injured by flying glass," Dyer said.

With her photographs from that earlier time spread out on a table in her office, she reminisced about the terrible event.

"I had just gotten off shift and was exhausted, but I was more hungry than tired — so I waited for her, thankfully," Dyer said.

Her basement work area was like a bunker. She was shielded by some high, small windows, a couch and a stranger.

"There was a guy reading a book at a table behind the couch, and he jumped over the couch and shielded me from flying debris," Dyer said.

The instinct to help, to protect and to secure came as second nature to so many people, Lancaster said.

"When I got outside, there was so much dust and smoke, and people walking around confused, dazed, bloodied," she said.

But something caught her eye in the distance, and it has stayed with her for the past 20 years. Lancaster said the memory is one of the reasons she's still in uniform today.

"I saw two guys carrying another guy on their shoulders. His legs were bloodied. I saw so many strangers helping each other. Everyone just helped."

Lancaster assumed command of AFMAO a few days after the June anniversary of the attack, and she hired Dyer that same month. Neither woman knew the other was at Khobar Towers.

"We didn't even know each other when we were stationed there," Lancaster said, recalling that her deployment was nearly over when the attack happened.

Dyer said she was beyond green back then.

"It was my fifth day there. We were locked down."

Now, the two survivors of the Khobar Towers attack find themselves working together, both in leadership roles at the sole stateside military mortuary — serving the fallen.

Both said the attack galvanized their sense of belonging in the Air Force.

"Definitely, it's the reason I still serve," Lancaster said.

"It's a big reason I'm still here," echoed Dyer.

Electa Wright, who was a "one-striper Citizen Airman" when the Khobar Towers attack happened, is now a retired senior master sergeant continuing to serve at AFMAO as a licensed mortuary technician.

In 1996, her knowledge of the Khobar Towers was nil.

"I didn't even know where it was," she confessed, quickly acknowledging how intimate her understanding of the place soon became. In response to the attack, she served 14-hour days on orders as a much-needed Reservist at the old Port Mortuary.

"It was my job to take the fallen members from station to station — to stay with them throughout the process," Wright said.

She said somewhere in the long and daunting days following the attack, when 19 fallen service members passed through the care of the old 'Port Mort,' she found a purpose in providing that final care to fellow service members. Twenty years later, Wright said opening pouches containing human remains from the attack forever changed her.

A service member killed by the blast while sleeping in his bed; another so burned by the intense heat that he appeared frozen in a position of running for his life. Wright said she still recalls the colors of their shirts. And she could tell the one member was sleeping because "he was curled up in the fetal position, and his eyes were closed."

On the night of the attack, security forces Airmen spotted a suspicious truck from a rooftop. After witnessing the driver running away, they began alerting residents. Moments later, the explosion occurred.

The carnage, the acts of heroism, the selflessness in the face of tragedy and the rallying of spirits all permeated the base like the dust and debris.

Lancaster said everything, including the change of command, stopped. Everyone focused all of their attention on taking care of the wounded and the fallen — and getting them home — and nothing else mattered.

The remains were transported from Dhahran to Dover's Port Mortuary. Airmen like Wright cleaned and dressed the remains, all to preserve their dignity and honor.

Back across thousands of miles of land and sea, it would be up to others to sift through the debris and ask questions like who and why. It would take 19 years to answer some of these questions.

In August 2015, a man suspected in the bombing was captured and identified as Ahmed al-Mughassil, the head of the military wing of Saudi Hezbollah, according to the U.S. State Department and the FBI. He is suspected of orchestrating the attack, which was the deadliest targeting of U.S. forces since the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marines' barracks in Beirut, when 241 American service members were killed. He has yet to face trial.

To the survivors, the lingering question of whether justice will ever be served for the 19 killed and the nearly 500 people injured was answered on the day of the attack.

"There can never be justice for that," said Lancaster, who received a Purple Heart for wounds inflicted that day by shards of imploding glass. "It was a defining time for me. I've never forgotten it."

(Bowser is deployed as chief of public affairs for AFMAO at Dover AFB. He is a Reservist assigned to the 439th Airlift Wing public affairs office at Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts.)



(Top) Col. Dawn Lancaster, commander of Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, reviews an old photo album from her time as a protocol officer deployed to Saudi Arabia. She lived in one of the Khobar Towers and often reflects back on the bombing that took place 20 years ago. (Middle) Chief Master Sgt. Meshelle Dyer, AFMAO chief enlisted advisor, reviews photographs taken during her assignment at Khobar Towers. She was a senior airman recreation specialist. (Bottom) Electa Wright, who was a "one-striper Airman" assigned to the mortuary when the Khobar Towers terrorist attack occurred, is a licensed mortuary technician at AFMAO. (Tech. Sgt. Scott Johnson)

Civilian vs. Military Experience

Both prove vital to success of new aircraft programs

By Shawn Jones

When it comes to accomplishing the mission, it's not uncommon for the civilian work experience of Citizen Airmen to play as vital of a role as their military experience.

This is certainly the case for Lt. Col. Robert Latka and other Reservists supporting the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

One of the center's missions is to acquire and prepare new aircraft, such as the KC-46 Pegasus refueling tanker.

While Latka's experience as a KC-10 Extender pilot with the 78th Air Refueling Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, certainly provides value to the organization's mission, it is his civilian experience as a pilot for an international package-delivery company that makes him particularly useful to the KC-46 program.

Once Latka learned the KC-46 would be based on a Boeing 767 platform, which just happens to be the airplane Latka flies for his full-time civilian job, he took the initiative to reach out to the center's KC-46 program office to offer his particularly appropriate blend of talents.

"I have been a lifelong tanker guy," said Latka, who started his Air Force career as a KC-135 Stratotanker maintenance crew chief. "I thought it would be great to have a hand in all three tankers during my career."

At first, the office didn't require help, but when it needed an Air Force tanker pilot who was also well-versed in the Federal Aviation Administration's rules and regulations for civilian airline operations, the office took Latka up on his offer, said Dr. Robert Marx, the FAA Military Certification Office liaison in the KC-46 program office.

Since 2012, Latka has been serving with the office about 30 days per year in a variety of roles.

Marx said Latka has contributed to the avionics development team, the cockpit working group, the test and evaluation team, the aircrew training team, the flight manual development and verification team, and the FAA certification team.

"This is really interesting work since our group is rather diverse, including pilots, design engineers and testers," Latka said. "The majority of my work involves editing and writing the KC-46 flight manuals."

But Marx thinks Latka's intangible contributions are just as significant as his tangible skills.

"He delivered an inspiring presentation at an all-call upon his return from deployment," Marx said. "He helped not only the civilians in our organization but also the junior officers

better understand what our mission is and who we do it for."

And Latka isn't the only Citizen Airman contributing to the center's mission.

"Over the years, we have had many Reservists in support of our acquisition programs," Marx said. "Reservists bring the warfighter into the program office. This is especially true when we are buying a commercial derivative aircraft since many Reservists also work in the commercial aviation industry as mechanics, pilots and inspectors."

Another Reservist supporting the center's mission is Senior Master Sgt. Constantine Karamargin. He is officially assigned as an individual mobilization augmentee, but he came up through the ranks maintaining KC-10s as a crew chief with the 714th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, also at JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

And just like Latka, Karamargin is able to leverage his civilian experience as an FAA maintenance inspector.

"He constantly relies on his vast experience as a crew chief and an FAA inspector to make sure the KC-46 maintenance program is the best it can be," Marx said. "He has also been instrumental in navigating the path to achieve FAA approval of the KC-46 maintenance program."

Marx said Karamargin's civilian experience has paid dividends for the program office.

"It has been critical since the KC-46 will be the first commercial derivative aircraft platform ever supported organically by the Air Force while still maintaining its FAA type design approval," he said.

Karamargin also audited airworthiness policies of civilian aircraft used for Air Force pilot training, developed and provided training materials and instructions related to aircraft inspections, supported the Battlefield Airborne Communication Node E-11A program, and assisted the E-8 Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System program with understanding FAA maintenance requirements.

The contributions of Latka and Karamargin have also paved the way for Lt. Col. Michael Capodicasa, another KC-10 pilot with the 78th ARS, who recently began serving with the Presidential Aircraft Recapitalization program office to assist with acquiring the new Air Force One.

In his civilian profession, Capodicasa flies a Boeing 747-8, which was selected as the airframe for the next Air Force One.

While Capodicasa is still becoming familiar with the program, Marx said he expects him to perform as well as his fellow Reserve Airmen.

"I have no doubt that, as the PAR program evolves, Lieutenant Colonel Capodicasa's involvement will prove just as important based on his 747-8 experience and that he will be a tremendous asset to the program," Marx said.

Marx gave credit to Airmen of all statuses for the center's success.

"This is all being done using the total force in development and not just operations," he said. "The center's motto of 'speed with discipline' would not otherwise be possible

without leveraging both the civilian and military experience the total force brings to the table. We are transforming the way the Air Force operates and maintains commercial derivative aircraft, and we are doing it as one team."

(Jones is assigned to the 514th Air Mobility Wing public affairs office at JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.)



Air Force Reservists supporting the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, utilize both their military and civilian experience to help the organization acquire and prepare new aircraft, such as the KC-46 Pegasus refueling tanker.

Beating the Odds

Pilot takes an unusual path to earning his wings

By Maj. Brooke Davis

There isn't just one path to becoming a pilot in the Air Force, as one Citizen Airman at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, demonstrated despite the odds being against him.

First Lt. Shay Dennis didn't take a traditional route to earn his wings as he transitioned from the 36th Aerial Port Squadron to become a C-17 pilot with the 728th Airlift Squadron.

"When I joined the Reserve, I told the recruiter that I wanted to do something with airplanes," Dennis said. "So I ended up loading aircraft as part of the aerial port squadron. One day I was out loading, and I saw someone wearing a flight suit without officer rank telling the loaders where to go and what to do.

"I found out the person was a loadmaster, and I decided that's what I wanted to do."

Dennis spoke with various leaders within the 728th AS to find out the scoop on being a loadmaster, which involved a lot of travel and long hours.

"That's exactly what I joined the military to do, and loadmaster training was the hardest thing I had ever done at that point in my life," he said.

As a loadmaster, Dennis was on continuous orders, which qualified him to receive benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill. He used those benefits to finish up his undergraduate degree and apply for a commission to be an officer in the Reserve.

"To get your commission and to put together your pilot application, you're pretty much on your own," he said. "Networking and word of mouth is how I was able to get the opportunity to commission and apply for pilot training."

While deployed to Turkey, Dennis started studying for the Air Force Officer Qualification Test. With lackluster scores on his first attempt, he was told he'd never get a pilot slot. Instead of letting that hold him back, he hired a tutor to help prep him to re-take the test. His scores from the second test were good enough to qualify him to apply for pilot training.

"When someone says you're not good enough or qualified for something, don't take no for an answer," Dennis said. "My scores met the minimum, and instead of being discouraged by what I was told, I went ahead and applied for pilot training and my commission."

During his loadmaster days, while speaking with a seasoned pilot, Dennis recalled telling him that he thought what pilots did in the cockpit looked easy.

"The pilots would always just sit back and not say anything to people who commented that anyone can punch buttons and program the autopilot to fly the aircraft," he said. "When I got to UPT (undergraduate pilot training), that was a great foot-in-mouth moment. The pilots never said what it took to

get them there, and when I got to the training, I felt like I got hit by a bus because it was so hard."

Flying twice a day for a year and learning things like aerobatic academics, Dennis acknowledged that he felt different from the students who were there right out of the Air Force Academy or ROTC.

"As a Reservist, you can't just move to where you're going for training," he said. "You're part of a community back home, and you can't just leave so easily. You've got a mortgage and a family back home to think about in addition to your training. My wife kept things together back at home and didn't put that extra burden on me while I was in training, but it was tough."

By sharing his story, Dennis wants to motivate people to persevere even when the odds are against them.

"Seek out the truth," he advised. "Don't count yourself out until you try. Just look at me. ... I didn't have the best scores or take the traditional route, but I'm here flying, doing what I love, and I wouldn't change a thing."

(Davis is assigned to the 446th AW public affairs office at Joint Base Lewis-McChord.)



TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

VIRTUAL OPTION MAKES IT EASIER FOR RESERVISTS TO COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS

BY PHIL RHODES

Recent policy changes are making it easier for Air Force Reservists to meet mandatory requirements outlined in the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program.

Now all Citizen Airmen completing a 180-plus day tour of duty who are returning to a job or attending college can attend a one-day Department of Labor briefing or take the course online. Until last fall, not all Reservists were allowed to use the virtual option, according to Charles "Eddy" Saunders, Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command TAP manager at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.

The virtual option is offered on the Joint Knowledge Online website. The site hosts all TAP classes including the one-day Veterans Administration briefing, the four-day Transition Goals, Plans, Success workshop and the three, two-day optional training tracks.

"So if members have a job or are in college, they are only required to take the VA class either in class or online," Saunders said. "The virtual course allows members to more easily complete their TAP requirements before they end their tour."

Reservists who don't have a job or college to return to are required to attend the five-day in-residence Transition GPS workshop or four-day virtual version of the class.

"The TAP program was expanded and enhanced in 2012 in response to President Obama's call for increased attention to the high rates of homelessness and joblessness among the nation's veteran population," Saunders said.

AFRC developed the virtual program to meet the needs of Reservists while still maintaining the intent of the program.

One member who welcomed the change is Master Sgt. Annjill Transfiguracion, a TAP counselor at the 919th Special Operations Wing, Duke Field, Florida. She noted a significant increase in TAP participation after the virtual option was offered.

"As a traditional Reservist drilling one weekend a month, it was a challenge to schedule the workshops during the week without having a full-time Airman & Family Readiness consultant," Transfiguracion said. "On the flip side, active-duty Airman & Family Readiness Centers aren't open on the weekends. By the time we received a response, the classes were already full."

Putting policy into practice, Transfiguracion recently completed a 180-day tour and was flagged to attend the mandatory training. Instead of opting for the one-day course and virtual training, she attended the brick and mortar classes at nearby Eglin AFB.

"There was a ton of information and resources that I never knew existed until attending TAP both as a service member requiring TAP and as a transition counselor," she said.

TAP briefings provide detailed information on benefits for both

veterans and their families, and, as Transfiguracion explained, it's never too early to attend the course.

"Some members think they don't need the information at the moment because they are not retiring or separating from the military," she said. "However, TAP will help them realize the importance of knowing their benefits sooner rather than later."

A recent TAP attendee echoes that sentiment.

Lt. Col. Jim Wilson, 919th SOW public affairs officer, recently completed the virtual course and said he found a wealth of information on a wide range of topics.

"My situation was a little different from others because I am still serving full time in the Reserve," Wilson said. "However, I found several resources focusing on investing, budgeting and paying of debt that were very helpful to me. I also learned the VA offers a two-day 'Boots to Business' class in partnership with the Small Business Administration for service members who are starting their own companies. The program is also open to military spouses like my wife who is starting her own business and is eager to learn more about topics such as finances, developing a business plan, and analyzing local and regional markets."

Wilson said the coursework significantly enhanced his family's overall financial readiness and that he found the virtual training readily available and easy to navigate.

"I know it can be hard to find time to break away from the job for training that will help us as we begin a new chapter in our lives. But this truly is time well spent and a large investment the Air Force is making in the lives of Citizen Airmen and their families," said Wilson, who has no plans to separate in the foreseeable future.

Some may argue that requiring Reservists to attend TAP after each set of 180-plus day orders is redundant, especially when they are returning to the same civilian careers they've had for 10-plus years.

"As a Citizen Airman mandated to do TAP, I understand the intent," Transfiguracion said. "I'm hopeful that TAP can be made optional after Reservists complete it the first time."

Waiving repeat attendance may be a double-edged sword. TAP provides a myriad of information about benefits and programs, and as Transfiguracion learned after attending the program a few times, "It's hard to catch it all the first time around."

For more information on TAP, Reservists may contact their local Airman & Family Readiness office. TAP courses are available at <https://jkodirect.jten.mil>.

(Rhodes is assigned to the HQ AFRC public affairs office at Robins AFB.)



COMBAT VETERANS

MOTORCYCLE GROUP PROVIDES CAMARADERIE, CHANCE TO GIVE BACK
BY BO JOYNER

For Maj. Bruce Hill Jr., the only thing better than jumping on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle and taking off on a solo ride into the New Mexico desert is jumping on his Harley and riding with a group of fellow combat veterans.

“There’s nothing like the freedom you feel when you’re on your motorcycle,” Hill said. “But it’s even better when you can share that feeling with people who have your same passions.”

Hill, an individual mobilization augmentee who is currently serving on an active-duty tour as public affairs chief and operations officer-in-charge for the Albuquerque site office of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and an instructor at the Defense Nuclear Weapons School, is passionate about motorcycle riding, and he’s passionate about helping people in his community. In the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association, he found a group of people with the same passions.

The mission of the CVMA is “to support and defend those who have defended our country and our freedoms,” according to the association’s website. Its focus is “to help veteran care facilities provide a warm meal, clothing, shelter and guidance or simply to say ‘thank you’ and ‘welcome home.’”

As a non-profit organization, the CVMA sponsors and participates in many motorcycle-related charity events year-round and donates money and service to various veteran care facilities and veteran charities.

To be a full member of the CVMA, military members must have served in a combat zone. Those who have not but still share the organization’s passions for riding and community service can ride as support members.

“We have full members from all services in our chapter of the CVMA,” said Hill, who also serves as the Air Force Academy liaison officer director for New Mexico and Southwest Texas. “But what we all have in common is that we faced combat. Whether you were subject to mortar fire or Scud missile attacks on your base or you were kicking down doors and clearing buildings, we experienced it in some way.”

Hill first experienced combat in 1990 when he deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Desert Shield with a Missouri Air National Guard C-130 Hercules transport unit. His job was to guard and issue secrets as a communications security courier as well as perform flight management and administrative duties.

He recalled one night after war broke out and Desert Shield turned into Desert Storm.

“We were 20 minutes out from landing on the main air base at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia,” Hill said. “It was about 0200 hours, and there was pitch-black darkness, with the exception of a regular lighting up of the sky as we flew around heavy thunderstorms. We were all listening to the tower operator until our navigator said, ‘You should tune into BBC Radio. There is something going on out there.’ When we did, we heard BBC reporting that nine Scud missiles had been launched toward Dhahran.

“The tower operator made no mention of the attack but ordered us to stop on the runway. As soon as we stopped, we exited the cockpit to join the rest of the flight crew, who had

opened the rear cargo bay. It was at that point that we saw fighter jets taking off in the darkness from the runway parallel to us and hard turning as soon as the wheels were up, one right after another, headed north toward Baghdad, Iraq. That was an amazing and exhilarating experience, and fortunately we did not have any casualties that night. However, Dhahran would receive another Scud missile attack a few days later that unfortunately took the lives of 28 fellow National Guardsmen.”

Hill said he began riding motorcycles about 25 years ago, when he was in college. But he didn’t get really serious about riding until 2011 when he was on a mission in support of war-planning exercises in the Asian-Pacific theater of operations.

“I actually bought my Harley-Davidson while I was deployed, and I’ve been riding religiously ever since,” he said. “When I got more serious about riding, I found out there was a group that shared that common bond of combat service and riding motorcycles. For me, it was a perfect fit.”

Hill refers to fellow CVMA members as his brothers, and he knows that someone always has his back and is always available to listen if he is going through tough times. ... someone who has been through similar experiences. When members are having a hard time, they can always reach out to other members for a “wind therapy” session — a motorcycle ride together.

The major said that while the CVMA likes to focus its charitable efforts on veteran organizations, the group does not hesitate to support other worthy causes.

“We just had our first regional rally in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, mostly for CVMA members outside of our chapter, but there were a couple of other organizations as well as independent riders who were interested in joining us,” he said. “There was a really violent death of a 10-year-old girl in town, and several motorcycle organizations came out for a vigil/birthday celebration the community was having. Members of the CVMA helped run interference for the family of the little girl so they could have the privacy they needed. It was a great way to show our support and get together with other motorcycle enthusiasts.”

Hill’s CVMA organization, Chapter 47-2, has been a big supporter of the New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers. The organization is dedicated to ending veteran homelessness in central New Mexico by providing transitional housing, a food pantry and case management services.

The chapter’s next big fundraiser is slated to raise money for 22 A Day, an organization set up to help combat veteran suicides. The organization got its name from the Veterans Administration’s estimate that 22 veterans commit suicide each day.

“We love helping out vets,” Hill said. “It’s the main reason we exist, but we also have that desire to help the community at large, to include those affected by the little girl who was murdered. We support whenever we can.”

For more information on the CVMA, check out the organization’s website at www.combatvet.org.

(Joyner is assigned to the Headquarters Air Force Reserve Command public affairs office at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia.)

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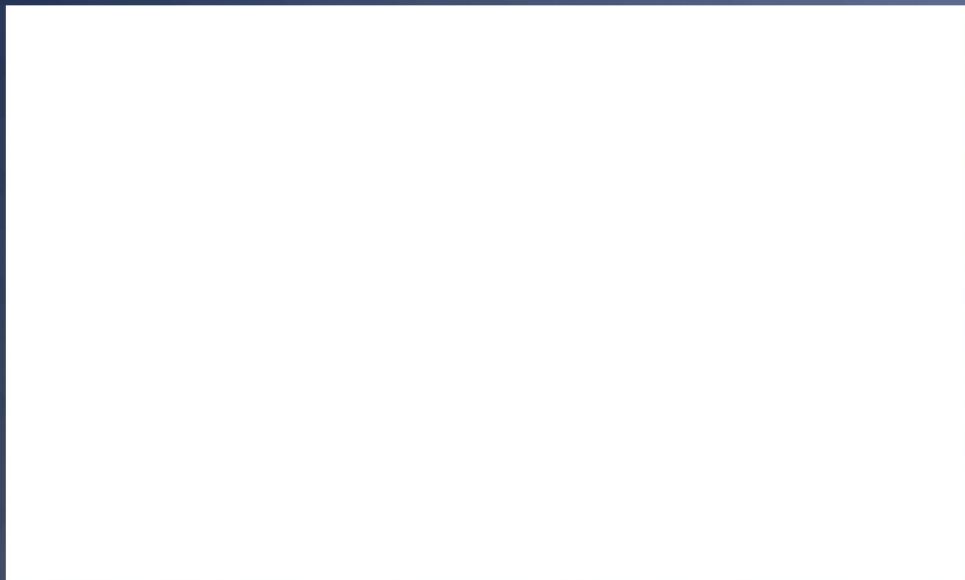
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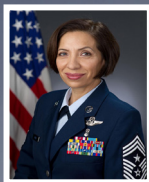
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CONNECT WITH LEADERSHIP ON FACEBOOK



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PARTNERSHIP

*AFRC and AMC have a long history of
successful associations*